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August 30, 2006

Lori Williams
Executive Director
National Invasive Species Council
1201 Eye Street, NW 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Address of invited organization
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The *Invasive Species and Forest Health: Expanding the Team Stakeholders Meeting* will be held in Washington, D.C. on November 14 – 15, 2006 at the Holiday Inn on the Hill. The National Invasive Species Council (NISC), on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Forest Service (FS), would like to invite your organization to attend this critical discussion of an invaluable natural and agricultural resource: forests.

Just start counting all of the Oak and Elm Streets in the United States—not to mention the Birch, Cherry, Chestnut and Maple Streets. Think of Christmas trees, camping, hiking, and shady spots (not to mention a list of products that could fill a library), which are all made possible by forests. Even before George Washington allegedly chopped down a cherry tree, trees have always held a special place in American history and continue to do so up to the present. Cherry trees in bloom still draw thousands of tourists to the Nation's Capitol each Spring.

Invasive species like the Asian Longhorned Beetle, Sudden Oak Death, Chestnut Blight, Dutch Elm Disease, Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Wooley Adelgid, and others present a serious threat to our forests. In the Federal Government, APHIS's Plant Protection and Quarantine Program (PPQ) and the FS have a large role in safeguarding U.S. forests from these threats. PPQ and FS, in conjunction with NISC and other partners, want stakeholders to attend this meeting to learn and share experiences about how to harness our collective energy to enhance the protection of U.S. forests.

NISC supports efforts like this conference to help bring stakeholders to the table with Federal partners to share information on important invasive species topics. Created by Executive Order 13112 in 1999, NISC is an inter-departmental council that helps to coordinate and ensure complementary, cost-efficient and effective Federal activities regarding invasive species. NISC has 13 cabinet-level members and is co-chaired by the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and the Interior.

The conference is free, but registration is required since available space is limited to 170 people. A block of rooms is on hold at the Holiday Inn on the Hill until October 23, 2006. You may call (800) 638-1116 and ask for the USDA-APHIS meeting rate. For additional information, please call Bill Dickerson at (919) 855-7345 or email Anna Rinick at anna.l.rinick@aphis.usda.gov. Register online at www.usda.aphis/ppq/meetings/foresthealth. The meeting agenda and updates will be posted on the website as soon as they are available.

On behalf of my colleagues at APHIS and FS, I hope you will attend and look forward to your participation in this forum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lori Williams
Executive Director